



# Montana DNRC Forestry Division

## SERVICE FORESTRY

Forest Pest Management

Forest Practices

Forest Stewardship

Montana Conservation  
Seedling Nursery

Urban and Community  
Forestry

# Urban and Community Forestry

*Promoting Stewardship of  
Montana's Urban and Community  
Forests*





## Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forestry Division Service Forestry Bureau Urban and Community Forestry

**D**NRC's Urban and Community Forestry Program provides assistance to communities throughout Montana to help establish and sustain urban and community forestry programs. Urban and community forestry programs enable communities to properly manage and care for their street and park trees through approaches such as comprehensive plans for tree planting and maintenance, tree care ordinances, and public education.

**T**he Urban and Community Forestry Program assists communities by providing services including technical and financial assistance, education, planning assistance, and volunteer coordination to local governments, community leaders, and volunteer groups. Urban and Community Forestry also promotes the continuing education of tree care professionals by offering outreach and sponsoring workshops. The program works closely with several major partners, including the USDA Forest Service, which provides 100% of the program's funding.

**T**he program is staffed by a state-wide coordinator and two regional community forestry specialists. One regional specialist serves the western half of Montana, and the other specialist serves the eastern half of the state.

### Goal

Promote active community forestry programs in Montana communities.

## DNRC Urban and Community Forestry Helps Montana Communities Reach Their Forestry Goals

**T**rees provide a wide range of environmental, economic, and aesthetic benefits to communities. Many Montana communities recognize the value of their community forests, but few have professional staff specifically dedicated to managing these important resources. Most small towns lack the funding base to hire a professional forester. DNRC's Urban and Community Forestry Program helps bridge the gap between communities' desire to manage their community forests and their limited resources for doing so by providing technical and financial assistance to build communities' capacity for forest management. More than half of Montana's communities receive assistance from the Urban and Community Forestry Program each year and have established or are working to establish an urban and community forestry program.

## Accomplishments FY 2004

Communities with active programs	132
Montana "Tree City USA" communities	39
Communities receiving technical assistance	96
Technology transfer activities (workshops, presentations, conferences, training sessions)	188





## Helping Communities Create Sustainable Forestry Programs

### Guidance For Program Development

The Urban and Community Forestry Program encourages eligible communities to participate in the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA Program, and provides assistance to communities to help them attain and retain Tree City USA designation. To be designated a Tree City USA community, a community must meet four requirements that DNRC Urban and Community Forestry recognizes as comprising a solid foundation for development of a sustainable urban and community forestry program. A community must: (1) establish a tree board, often a group of citizen volunteers who are responsible for developing and administering a tree management program; (2) establish a tree care ordinance; (3) commit \$2 per capita annually to a tree care program; and (4) celebrate Arbor Day.

There are currently 39 Tree City USA communities in Montana, and 83% of Montana's eligible population (individuals who live in incorporated cities and towns) live in a community with Tree City USA designation. Several Montana communities have maintained Tree City USA designation for more than 20 years, and new communities are seeking the designation every year. Montana is among the top 10 states in the nation for percent of cities with Tree City USA designation.

Although participation in the Tree City USA program is limited to incorporated cities and towns, DNRC's Urban and Community Forestry Program reaches out to all communities in Montana, with the goal of developing a sustainable urban and community forestry program in every community. The Urban and Community Forestry program provides a wide range of technical assistance to all interested communities, and seeks sources of funding that can help provide financial aid to both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

### Technical Assistance

Urban and Community Forestry staff members provide technical assistance to more than half of Montana's communities for activities such as tree inventories, developing tree care ordinances, and developing community forest management plans. Assistance also includes services such as project and grant planning; workshops on topics related to tree care and maintenance; and community forestry presentations to schools and advisory groups. Urban and Community Forestry staff also provide assistance in volunteer coordination, helping communities organize and sustain the volunteer efforts that often are the heart of community forestry programs.



*Roundup, one of 39 Tree City USA communities in Montana*

*"Planting and caring for trees along our streets and in our parks is one of the best and least expensive ways of improving communities throughout Montana. DNRC's Urban and Community Forestry Program is an invaluable resource to communities throughout the state on how to do that efficiently and effectively."*

Jon G. Thompson, Parks and Recreation Department, City of Great Falls

### Financial Assistance

The Urban and Community Forestry Program offers several cost-share grant programs to communities to help develop and sustain forestry programs and to help support Arbor Day celebrations. Any community in Montana is eligible to apply for a \$150 Arbor Day Grant, and cities that have held the Tree City USA designation for a year or more are eligible for an additional \$250. Tree City USA Grants of \$500 are available to communities that are newly designated Tree City USA communities. The program offers additional grants as funding allows. In 2004, the program awarded Program Development Grants of up to \$5,000 to 16 communities.





*Participant in a tree climbing and rigging workshop*



*Participants in a large-tree planting workshop*

## Providing Continuing Education For Tree Care Professionals

The Urban and Community Forestry Program seeks to provide educational opportunities for tree care professionals, with a goal that all practitioners are educated and knowledgeable in current urban and community forestry principles, practices, and standards. Professional arborists receive certification through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), and must participate in continuing education to maintain credentialing. Professional arborists in Montana have limited opportunities for training and continuing education within state, as many courses are offered out of state. The need to take time away from their businesses to travel long distances for continuing education is a hardship for many Montana arborists. The Urban and Community Forestry Program has helped bring additional training opportunities to Montana by securing an agreement with the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the ISA whereby the chapter will hold at least one workshop in Montana each year. The Urban and Community Forestry Program also sponsors training and speakers at the Annual Conference of the Association of Montana Turf and Ornamental Professionals, providing additional training opportunities and continuing education units for Montana arborists.

## Educating the Public About the Importance of Community Forestry

Increasing public understanding of the importance and value of community forests and of the need for sound community forest management is an important goal of the Urban and Community Forestry Program. In addition to the education that occurs during the development of community forestry programs, Urban and Community Forestry Program staff provide educational outreach through presentations to schools and community groups, a newsletter, and an informative website with links to publications and other educational resources.

Arbor Day celebrations held in many Montana communities offer one important means of increasing public understanding of the benefits of community forestry. Grants offered by the Urban and Community Forestry Program help fund Arbor Day events, and the program also encourages 5th-grade

teachers to involve their students in a special curriculum unit and poster contest sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Pictured below is the 2004 Montana state winner, shown with her teacher and planting a tree during the awards ceremony at her school.





## Community Involvement

- 57% of Montana's communities are participating in the Urban and Community Forestry Program.
- 83% of Montana's eligible population live in a Tree City USA designated community.
- 58% of Montana's communities located on tribal lands are participating in the Urban and Community Forestry Program.

## Citizen Participation

- Local citizens contributed over 3,000 volunteer days to urban and community forestry in 2003.



## Investment in Urban and Community Forestry

- Since 1991, DNRC Urban and Community Forestry has awarded grant funding to more than half of Montana's communities.
- Since 1991, Montana communities have invested nearly \$20 million on urban and community forestry programs.
- Montana communities invest an average of \$5 per capita on community forestry programs, more than twice the amount required for Tree City USA designation.

### *Great Falls: The Value of a Tree Inventory*

Great Falls benefitted from having begun a tree inventory when a severe wind storm hit the city in August 2002, destroying or causing extensive damage to many trees. The city had begun a tree inventory in the fall of 2001, using Geographic Positioning System (GPS) information to map public street and park trees.

Great Falls carries insurance on all public street and park trees as part of its overall insurance policy, and was able to use information from the tree inventory when it filed a claim with its insurance carrier. The insurance company agreed to reimburse the full value of the inventoried trees, at about \$3,450 per tree. Compensation for trees which had not yet been inventoried was just \$150 per tree. Because of the inventory information, the city received \$165,000 for restoration of its urban forest, far more than the \$10,200 it would have received without the inventory information. The economic benefits from just this one incident far exceeded the costs of conducting the inventory.



*Forsyth Arbor Day 2004*

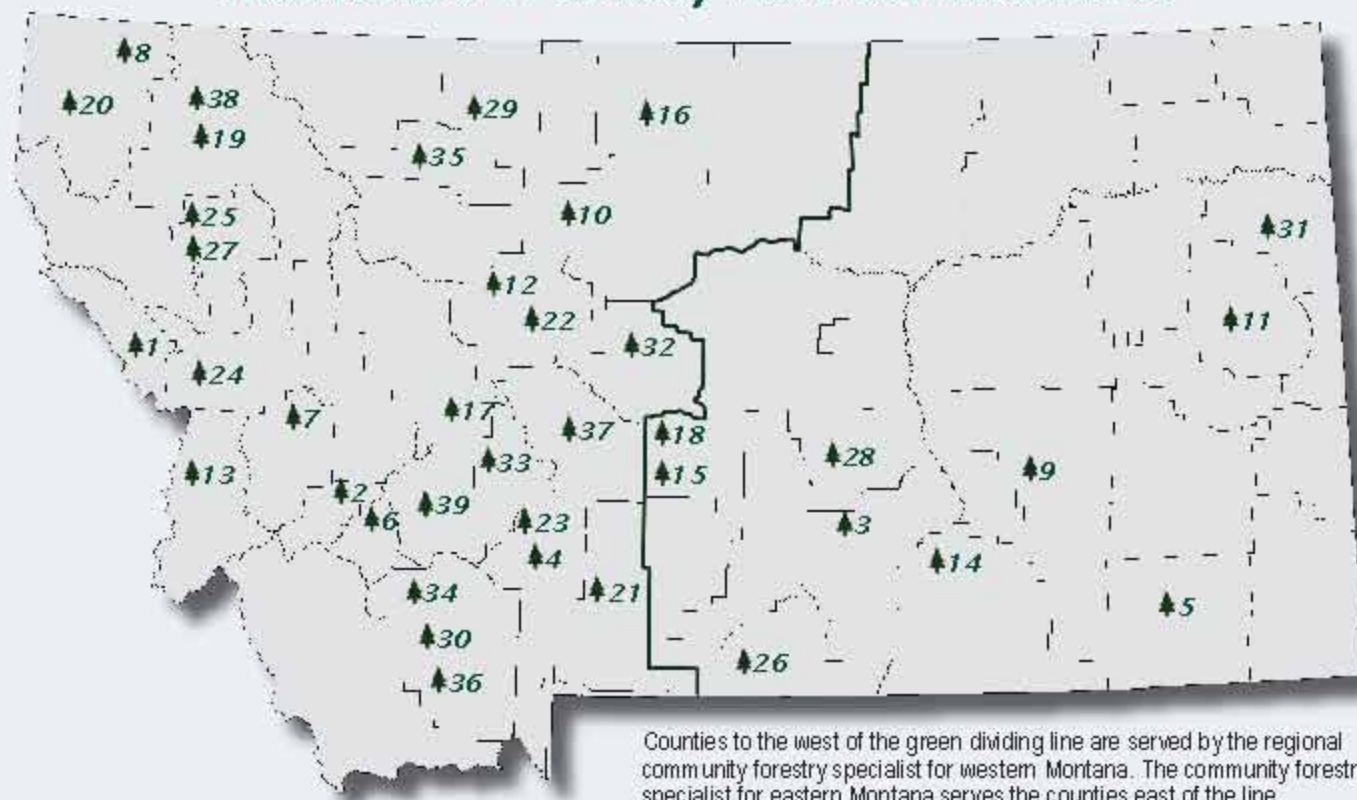
### *Forsyth: Student-Initiated, Award-Winning Community Forestry*

High school students in Forsyth have spearheaded efforts to establish a community forestry program, and have set in place a program that is a model for other communities. In 2002, students gave a presentation to the Mayor and City Council requesting that Forsyth participate in the Tree City USA

program. The Mayor and City Council agreed to pursue Tree City USA designation, and the city received its designation in 2003. A high-school government class developed a tree care ordinance for the City Council, and a student government leader is a member of the tree board. Since 2002, students and teachers have planned a city-wide Arbor Day celebration, which includes a variety of events and tree planting. Students also raise money for tree planting, are using GPS to inventory city trees, and have developed a tree and vegetation brochure for community members. Forsyth received a Tree City USA Growth Award in 2004 in recognition of the community's outstanding work.



## Montana's Tree City USA Communities



### Number of Years Designated as a Tree City USA Community

City	Years	City	Years	City	Years
1 Alberton	1	14 Hardin	11	27 Ronan	3
2 Anaconda	10	15 Harlowton	17	28 Roundup	12
3 Billings	20	16 Havre	14	29 Shelby	4
4 Bozeman	10	17 Helena	18	30 Sheridan	4
5 Broadus	5	18 Judith Gap	9	31 Sidney	3
6 Butte	9	19 Kalispell	17	32 Stanford	4
7 Drummond	2	20 Libby	11	33 Townsend	4
8 Eureka	2	21 Livingston	2	34 Twin Bridges	4
9 Forsyth	2	22 Malmstrom AFB	11	35 Valier	2
10 Fort Benton	7	23 Manhattan	9	36 Virginia City	2
11 Glendive	2	24 Missoula	16	37 White Sulphur Springs	1
12 Great Falls	23	25 Polson	14	38 Whitefish	9
13 Hamilton	3	26 Red Lodge	5	39 Whitehall	12

Designated Tree City USA communities must establish a tree board and a tree care ordinance, commit \$2 per capita annually to a tree care program, and celebrate Arbor Day. A \$500 grant is awarded to newly designated Tree City USA communities in Montana. Communities that have held the designation for one year or more also are eligible for a \$250 Arbor Day grant, in addition to the the \$150 Arbor Day grant any community may apply for.

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